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LETTER  
CIRCULAR  
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SWEEPING COMPOUNDS (ALSO KNOWN AS "FLOOR SWEEP"  
AND "DUST DOWN")

This letter circular has been prepared as a result of numerous requests received by the National Bureau of Standards for general information regarding sweeping compounds.

There are on the market many floor-sweeping compounds or preparations made up of an absorbent material (such as sawdust), sand or ground feldspar, mixed with ingredients such as oil, wax emulsions, coloring matter, disinfectant, etc. Fine sawdust, bits of paper, tea leaves, etc., moistened with water are also used as sweeping compounds.

Some commercial compounds are colored with iron oxide or other pigments and some contain naphthalene flakes, paraffin wax, etc. Essential oils, such as oil of eucalyptus, oil of sassafras, etc., are some times added to impart a pleasant odor to the compound or to mask any unpleasant odor of the ingredients used. Pine oil disinfectant, a small amount of creosote oil, and probably other materials can be used as disinfectants.

In the water-wax emulsion type of sweeping compounds, the mineral oil is replaced by waxes, resins, water, and emulsifying agents. Instead of a thin film of oil on the floor, a film of wax is deposited. The wax type of sweeping compound is intended for use on floorings, such as linoleum, rubber, asphalt tile, mastic, and polished wood, that may be affected by oils.

Sawdust, excelsior, asbestos fiber, hemp, seed hulls, etc. can be used as the absorbent material.

The National Bureau of Standards is not in a position to furnish factory plans or data on the cost of materials, mixing machinery, etc. If made in small lots, the compounds can probably be mixed satisfactorily by hand. Information on mixing, packaging, and machinery that may be used advantageously can probably be obtained from firms listed in trade directories.

Government agencies buy sweeping compound on the latest revision of Federal Specification P-S-863. A copy of this specification can be purchased for 10 cents (stamps not accepted) from the Business Service Center, General Services Administration, Washington 25, D. C.

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